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THE BOGOMILS AND BOGOMILISM.¹

I.

THE Bogomils and their teaching are little known to the general public, but this does not mean that they are devoid of a general interest. They are profoundly interesting historically, and also from the standpoint of religion, of manners, of psychology, and to a certain extent even of literature.

To begin with, Bogomilism in its wider sense was one of the important religious movements in the Middle Ages. Like most religious teachings it came from the East, but it received, in the 10th century, its name and a new form in Bulgaria. From there it spread not only in the neighbouring countries, but also far beyond the geographic boundaries of the Balkans proper. The so-called Patareni in the north of Italy, the Cathari and the Albigenses in the South of France, were in essence only ramifications of that Bogomil sect which had its centre and its main source of inspiration in the Balkans. Besides, the Albigensian doctrine (which spread chiefly between the 10th and the 12th centuries) was known as the *haeresia Bulgarorum*. There also existed a continuous intercourse between the French and the Southern Slav heretics. Moreover, the Bogomils were usually looked upon by the Cathari and Albigenses as their authorities in matters spiritual. In a letter written by the Bishop Conrad (the pope's Nuntius in the South of France in 1223) we read even about a "heresiarch, whom the heretics call their pope, and who lives within the confines of Bulgaria, Croatia and Dalmatia, near the Hungarian nation. It is to him that the Albigensian heretics swarm in order to get answers to their questions" (quem haeretici papam suum appellant, habitantem in finibus Bulgarorum, Croatiae et Dalmatiae, iuxta Hungarorum nationem. Ad eum confluunt haeretici Albigenses, ut ad eorum consulta respondeat).²

¹ A public lecture delivered at King's College, 11 November, 1929.

² Quoted from F. Rački's *Bogomili i Patareni* (published by the Jugoslav Academy in 1870)—so far the best study of the subject, in spite of the fact that some of his conclusions have been recently contested or at least modified.

The Italian Patareni, too, were in contact with the Bogomils. Even the most important Patarenian and Albigenian document, the so-called "Secret Book," was brought into Lombardy from Bulgaria and translated into Latin for the "Church" of Concorezzo—a town not very far from Milan. The book is a dialogue between Christ and St. John about the creation, as well as the end, of man and the Universe, and is written in the spirit of the Bulgarian Bogomils. The Slavonic original is lost, but its content has been preserved in two Latin versions—one of which was discovered in Carcassonne, and the other in Vienna. The Dominican Inquisitor, himself a former Cathar, Reinerius Sachoni, mentions at about the same time a certain Nazarius from Concorezzo who repeatedly asserted, before him and several witnesses, that he had received his heretical teaching from the bishop and the presbyter of the "Bulgarian Church" (ab episcopo et filio maiore ecclesiae Bulgariae).

The Bogomils and their Western followers were thus responsible for many far-reaching events in Southern and South-Western Europe. The conquest of Bosnia—that gateway into Hungary and Central Europe—by the Turks, took place in connection with, and with the connivance of, the Bogomils of that country. A more heroic part was played by the Albigenses during the terrible crusade organised against them by the pope Innocent III. The historical consequences of that crusade for France and Provence are well known. And within the Roman Catholic Church herself we see the formation of such important bodies as the Dominican order and the Holy Inquisition with the aim of combating, above all, the spread and the existence of that heresy in the West. Moreover, in Bogomilism and in its Western branches there were some of those germs which subsequently ripened into the great Reformation. Together with this, one can detect in them, however, certain elements whose triumph was perhaps even less desirable than was the ultimate triumph of their cruel persecutor—the *ecclesia militans*. But this can be made clear only by a proper definition of the Bogomil doctrines, of their spread, their aim and their significance.

II.

Although imported from Asia Minor, the Bogomil teaching was only modified more or less in Bulgaria. It can be defined as a mixture of the early *primitive* Christianity with a pronounced Manichean dualism, with certain Gnostic principles, and with a sprinkling of Buddhism. Its principal

roots are to be found in at least two well-known and kindred sects: the Armenian Paulicians, and the Syrian Massalians. For their teaching consisted of the same mixture. From Mani they took their radical dualism—their conception of an eternal fight between Light and Darkness, *i.e.*, between the good and the evil deity, between Ormuzd and Ahriman. From Christianity they adopted above all certain moral precepts, taken in their literal sense from the Gospels, while Gnosticism supplied them partly with their Christology, and partly with their cosmogony.

Such a mixture—ingenuously combined and simplified—was bound to become a dangerous rival to the official Christianity with its theological hair-splitting, its inner dissensions and its growing secularisation. No wonder that the Byzantine emperors did their best to suppress both Massalians and Paulicians. The pious zeal of the Empress Theodora alone was responsible for about 100,000 martyrs duly executed, but in vain. As a last resort, the stubborn heretics were sent to the confines of the Empire with the task of guarding the frontier against the barbarian invaders. Many Syrians and Armenians were thus transferred to Thrace as early as 752 (by Constantine V.) and later on particularly in 969, when John Zimisces settled a large body of Armenian Paulicians near the present Bulgarian town, Plovdiv (Philippopolis). It was natural that the new settlers, fanatical as they were, should try to sow their heresy not only among the local population, but in all those districts which were within their reach, that is, over the whole of Bulgaria, whose Christianity was at that time still new and therefore weak.

There soon arose also various social reasons which seemed to foster the imported heresy. This happened after the tremendous strain exacted from the Bulgarian nation by its enterprising ruler, Tsar Simeon. Under his son Peter (927-68), who was a weakling and a tool in the hands of his Byzantine wife, there followed a period of weariness and decadence. The result was the subsequent loss of the entire eastern portion of Bulgaria to the Greeks, while its western part, comprising Macedonia and Albania, raised by Shishman into an independent kingdom with Okhrida as its capital, also proved short-lived. It was during and after Peter's rule that the new heresy, with its quietist, anti-political, and pessimistic views, took its deepest roots in Bulgaria.¹ And the man who gave it its peculiar "Slavonic" characters, who became its teacher, leader and organiser, was a certain priest Jeremia.

¹ The Bogomil heresy was probably fostered also as a protest against the aggressive Greek clergy which invaded Bulgaria during the Byzantine rule.

As he had however assumed the name Bogomil, which is the Slavonic equivalent for Theophilus, the teaching was called after him, at least among the Balkan Slavs. Bogomil was also one of the daring reformers of that time—since he ruthlessly denounced all social and economic privileges.

After the conquest of Bulgaria by the Greeks, Bogomilism began to spread in the Eastern Empire itself and found one of its strongholds in Constantinople. The Bulgarian settlers carried it again as far as Asia Minor. In the Western Bulgarian state, which reached its climax and its fall under Shishman's son, Samuel (976-1014), the Bogomil heresy got hold also of Macedonia where its adepts were called Babuni (after the Babuna mountains to the north of Prilep) by the Slavs, and Kudugeroi,¹ or Fundaitai (from funda—the bag) by the Greeks. In Serbia the ground was less favourable for a widespread propaganda. Its first state builder, Stephen Nemanja, probably saw all the danger of political disintegration which might have resulted from the Bogomil activities. Hence he turned violently against them. So did the first Serbian Metropolitan, St. Sava (1169-1237). Later on, King Stephen Dechansky sent his son Stephan Dushan at the head of an expedition to punish the "impious and heathen Babuni." Also the famous Code of Stephan Dushan himself forbade, under severe penalty, any Bogomil propaganda. An extremely favourable soil for such a propaganda was, however, provided by Bosnia. In the second half of the 12th century Bosnia came, for a short while, under the rule of the Byzantine emperor, Manuel I Comnenus, who apparently intended to use that part of the Balkans as a stepping-stone for further conquests in the West. It was at that period that Bosnia came into direct contact with Bulgaria and the Bulgarian Bogomils. The actual reasons for its Bogomil tendencies were, however, rather complicated, and they will be dealt with only later.

So much for the Balkans proper. The great trade routes between the East and West, via Bulgaria, did the rest. The above-mentioned heresy of Lombardy and the South of France may have had some other channels as well; yet the most important of them was the one from the Balkans and through the Balkans.

III.

After these summary remarks we can return to the Bogomil teaching itself; and this brings us at once into contact with Manicheanism. Its starting-point is approximately the following:

¹ The origin of this name is obscure.

God, as a perfect Being, could not have created an imperfect world with its pain and suffering. He made only the invisible spiritual Universe (*τὰ ὑπερχοσμία* of the Massalians), while its distorted caricature—the visible material Universe—was created by His rival, Satanail, who seems to combine the function of the eternal prince of darkness and that of the Gnostic *δημιουργός*.

Wavering between the Zoroastrian bi-theism, which implies two coeval deities on the one hand, and the Christian monotheism on the other, the Bogomils as a whole show all the shades between the two conceptions. Some adepts were inclined to consider both deities, the good and the evil, as equally strong and eternal—hence also the occasional worship of Satan in certain Manichean sects. Others proclaimed Satanail himself a creation of God—either as one of His two sons, or as the chief of the rebellious angels. The Macedonian “Church” (*ecclesia Drugutiae*, or *Drogometiae*, called after the Macedonian tribe of Dragovichii) stood for a radical dualism. So did the Bogomil Greek community in Constantinople, whose “bishop” Niketas made this view prevail, for a while among the Cathari. This happened in 1161, at the congress of St. Félix de Caraman (near Toulouse) in which also the Bulgarian Bogomils took part. The Bulgarian “Church” proper (*ecclesia Bulgariae*, *ordo de Burgalia*) adhered however to that moderate view according to which the principles of good and evil are not co-eval and not equally strong. So did the Bosnian “Church” (*ecclesia Sclavoniae*). Yet no matter whether they looked upon Satanail in the sense of the Zoroastrian Ahriman, or in the sense of a rebellious angel, they all saw in him the actual creator of the material world. And according to their teaching, Satanail was successful only till he came to Adam. For, having made the material Adam, he was unable to impart the soul to him. He saw himself compelled to ask God Himself for co-operation. In order to persuade Him, he promised that Adam’s soul, as well as the souls of Adam’s descendants, should belong for ever to God’s spiritual Universe. God accepted the bargain, and sent into the inanimate body a fallen angel.¹

¹ According to Mani, Adam was entirely the work of Satan, who permeated him, however, with those particles of Light which he had stolen from God. According to the *Secret Book* again, Satanail “*excogitavit et fecit hominem ad similitudinem ejus vel sui, et praecepit angelo tertii coeli intrare in corpus luteum. Et tulit de eo et fecit aliud corpus in formam mulieris, et praecepit angelo secundi coeli introire in corpus mulieris. Angeli vero ploraverunt videntes in se formam mortalem et esse dissimiles forma. Et praecepit opus carnale facere in corporibus luteis. . . .*” (The Carcassonne MS.) The last sentence may perhaps explain the Bogomil aversion to sex, marriage and the birth of children.

The souls of all subsequent humans were also fallen angels whose duty and destiny it was to return finally to God. Satanail, however, did not abide by his promise. In the form of a serpent he seduced Eve. The result of this adultery was Cain and his sister, Kalomela, through whom sin and corruption invaded mankind itself, while Abel, the rightful son of Adam, was slain. But through his carnal union with Eve, Satanail lost his power of a *δημιουργος*: he could no longer create. Yet with God's consent he remained the actual "*κοσμοκράτωρ*," the ruler of that material Universe which was his own product. Satanail's rule had a complete sway over mankind until the appearance of Christ, that is, during the entire period of the Old Testament. Jehovah was not the true God, but Satanail himself who had deluded Moses and the prophets in order to enslave mankind all the more. Hence the Old Testament must be rejected wholesale, or almost so. The divine Truth began only with Christ, since Christ was the *λόγος*: the emanation of the true God who, moved by pity towards enslaved mankind, pressed Him out of His own heart and sent Him on to the earth.

Yet Christ was not physically born, because as God He could not partake of anything material. His human form was not a physical, but a spiritual body—a *σῶμα πνευματικόν*, possessing only apparently various physical attributes, and only apparently suffering on the cross (compare the *Jesus impatibilis* of Mani, and also the Armenian Monophysitism). His mother herself was not a real human being, but an angel who had been dispatched into the world with the express purpose of giving birth to Christ through an *apparent* physical process. To quote the Pope, Eugene IV., the Bogomils (in this case the Bosnian ones) "*mysterium divinae incarnationis simulatorium fuisse contendunt, ita ut incarnatio filii dei, passio, resurrectio, non vere sed apparenter credantur exhibita.*"¹ Christ fettered Satanail, having previously deprived him of his particle *il* (i.e., "God"). He was degraded to a mere Satan, and his complete sway over mankind was finished. Mankind could now move towards God—through moral perfection. Christ, on the other hand, returned to His Father, and became united to Him.

IV.

An attempt to disentangle in all this the Judaeo-Christian, Manichean and Gnostic elements would be almost hopeless. And such a variety of ingredients was bound to produce

¹ Quoted from *Starine I* (published by the Jugoslav Academy, Zagreb).

fluctuations and differences with regard to many problems. In the matter of man's moral freedom, for example, the Bogomils show all the degrees between determinism on the one hand and free choice on the other. The prevailing belief, however, was that, although fettered, man can liberate himself from the tyranny of Satanail, that is, of matter, or of his own body, by despising and mortifying it. Thus whatever the differences between various branches of the Bogomils may have been, they all agreed on one point—on their rejection of everything physical and carnal. Their morality was the most radical Puritanism, a Puritanism which regarded even marriage as a sinful institution—at least in so far as marriage gives sanction to sexual intercourse. The higher members of their Church were not allowed to marry, and those ordinary members who could not abstain from married life were, like the disciples of Mani, always conscious of its "sinfulness." Tolstoy's ideas, as expressed in the *Kreutzer Sonata*, would have been gladly endorsed by them. The aversion to everything carnal became with the Bogomils such an obsession as to make them discard all food which had any connection with sex and with propagation by sex. In other words, they were strict vegetarians, excluding from their *menu* even eggs, milk and cheese.

Owing to their utter detestation of everything physical, the Bogomils rejected all material symbols. Even the expression "daily bread" in the Lord's Prayer was altered by them into "spiritual bread." The idea of the resurrection of the body was regarded by them as a blasphemy—since the human body was, in their eyes, only a prison created by Satanail. Like the Paulicians, the majority of them repudiated also the cross as a purely material symbol and a tool which made Christ suffer. Their negative attitude was extended to temples, holy pictures and statues, to baptism with water, to the Communion—briefly, to everything that was connected with any kind of material agent.

As their negation of carnal impulses was almost pathological in its ruthlessness, it is quite possible that the suppressed instinct of sex was endeavouring, now and again, to assert itself at all costs, even in its distorted aspects. Hence the name Bulgar or Bougre, as the Albigenses were often called in France, became almost identical with the sexual pervert. Yet one must not forget that the persecutors of the Cathari and Albigenses were only too glad to charge them with the most fantastic vices in order to compromise those sects in the eyes of the Catholics.

Whatever the aberrations of certain perverted Gnostic and Manichean sects ¹ in Asia Minor may have been, they certainly cannot be extended to the Bogomils, nor to their French or Italian counterparts, who were perhaps the most radical ascetics in the entire religious history of Europe. As such, they mortified their bodies by fasting at least three times a week ; and one of their strong tendencies was that of voluntary poverty. In many cases they were also communists like the early Christians.

Looking on sin as a victory of matter over the spirit, they regarded all sins as mortal. A member who had committed a heavy sin was obliged to confess it publicly ; and if he belonged to the higher grades he had to be re-baptised and re-initiated. They saw the ultimate moral truth in the teaching of Christ, particularly in the Sermon on the Mount. Yet a too narrow interpretation of that teaching led them to that dogmatic one-sidedness and moral rigidity which, in the end, may be as harmful to life as any immorality. Because of their literal adherence to the moral essence of the Gospels, the Bogomils, like the Cathari and the Albigenses, naturally considered themselves the only true followers of Christ. This is why they called themselves simply Christians, "good Christians," as was the case in Bosnia, or the "pure ones" (*καθαροί*) in the South of France. The secularised official Church, on the other hand, was abhorred by them as the Scarlet Woman of the Revelation, as an institution of Antichrist.

Yet, however much they hated the Catholic Church with her worldly power and her centralised priestly hierarchy, they themselves could not do without an organised religious body, without a "Church," in fact. The already mentioned Dominican monk and Inquisitor, Reinerius Sachoni, enumerates in his *Contra Waldenses* sixteen Cathar and Patarenian "bishoprics" in Italy, France, Constantinople, and the Balkans—three of them, in Bulgaria, Macedonia, and Bosnia, being Slavonic. But in spite of Bishop Conrad's hint at an Albigensian Pope "habitantem in finibus Bulgarorum," those churches were not centralised. The chief of the Bulgarian Bogomils may have enjoyed a special confidence and reverence on the part of all kindred sects, but he was never considered by them a supreme head, a "Pope."

To become a member of any of those "churches" was a difficult matter. Regarding the candidate's *conscious* moral per-

¹ It may be of interest that among some Eastern sects there were known cases of licence with a "moral" purpose : an unbridled sterile squandering of one's sexual energy was looked upon as a means of stopping the further propagation of mankind.

fection as the chief condition, they admitted to their membership only adults, and this after a long probation. The actual members were again divided into two distinct groups, as planned already by Mani: ordinary believers (*credentes*) and the perfect ones (*perfecti, electi, boni homines, bonshommes* in the South of France). The latter were only a small minority who had to pass through all the stages of moral discipline and perfection. They were revered by their flock as men filled with the Holy Ghost, as Christ-bearers (*Θεοτόκοι*), or simply as "Christs."¹ They were also the spiritual leaders of the community, in so far as everyone of them—including the women—had an equal right to officiate as priest, although there was a certain gradation among them. Reinerius Sachoni mentions four grades among the "perfecti" of France: *episcopus* or *ancianus*, *filius major*, *filius minor*, and *diaconus*; to which correspond among the Balkan Bogomils: *djed* (lit. grandfather, *ancianus*), *gost* (guest), *starac* (elder), and *strojnik* (administrator).

The morality of the "perfect ones" was of course much severer than that of ordinary believers. They had to be living examples of purity and austerity. And the religious service they held was as austere and simple as the priests themselves. Its kernel consisted of the Lord's Prayer, a homily, and the public confession of the members. There was no special ritual—except that of baptism, performed not with water but by holding the Gospel over the head of the new believer, and the solemn consecration of an ordinary member into a "perfect" one—the *consolamentum*, as they called it. This ceremony, a reminiscence of the early Christian ordinations, was regarded as the true "baptism of the Spirit," which alone made man's soul a vehicle of Christ, reconciling it thus to God. Without such a consecration the soul was bound to be incarnated again and again—even in an animal body, until it became definitely purified. Since no one without the *consolamentum* was sure of salvation, the ordinary believers underwent it only on the deathbed, because death alone was a sufficient warrant against a new sin which might destroy the validity of the consecration itself.

V.

The worldliness, the pomp, and the abuses of the official Church only strengthened the Bogomils and their kindred in their own righteousness, in their moral firmness, and above all

¹ Compare the Russian sect of Khlisty which is a distortion of Christy, i.e., Christs.

in their conviction that their community was the only true representative of Christ on earth. These features alone were sufficient to impress and to induce precisely the more serious minds to embrace the heresy, in spite of all persecutions. Yet, curiously enough, the Southern Slav Bogomilism was not much persecuted until the 12th century. In Bulgaria, as early as in the 10th century, it found an eloquent opponent in the presbyter Kozma whose "Speech against the Heretics" is the most important Slavonic document relating to that sect. All the same, Bogomilism grew among the Bulgarians to such an extent as to infect the Court itself. Gabriel, the son of Tsar Samuel, was a Bogomil. So was his wife. During the last quarter of the 14th century the Bulgarian State which, having once more thrown off the Byzantine yoke, had reached a new climax of prosperity and power under Ivan Asyen II. (1218-41), came definitely to an end. Under the Turkish rule some of the Bogomils emigrated, while others embraced Christianity or Mohammedanism. In the environs of Plovdiv there are still about 50,000 Bulgarian Catholics who call themselves simply Paulicians. They are former Bogomils, mostly of Armenian extraction, converted to Catholicism by the Franciscans from Bosnia as late as the 16th century.

The foundation of a national Orthodox Church in Serbia by St. Sava was perhaps the actual reason why the Bogomil propaganda did not take deep root in that country. The failure to organise a national Catholic Church in Bosnia was, on the other hand, probably among the main causes of the rapid growth of Bogomilism among the Bosnian Slavs. And there were at least two important circumstances which fostered such a movement: one of them, being mainly political, concerned the rulers; while the other concerned the common folk and some of their cherished traditions.

As is known, in 1102 the Hungarian King Coloman was crowned the King of Croatia, Dalmatia, and incidentally also of Bosnia. Owing to her remote geographic situation, the "Bans" (viceroys) of Bosnia enjoyed a kind of semi-independence; yet their secret or open tendency was towards a complete emancipation from any interference on the part of the Pope's protégés—the kings of Hungary. On the other hand, the Pope himself kept a watchful eye on Bosnia, whose territory has always been contested between the Eastern and the Western Churches. Hence a double control—political and ecclesiastic—was exercised over that vast country. Politically it was dependent on Hungary;

and ecclesiastically, for the most part, on the Archbishops of Split (Spalato), many of whom, however, were only too willing tools of the Hungarian sovereigns. No wonder that the Bosnian "Bans" hoped to weaken the outside political interference by emancipating their country in matters ecclesiastical. The best compromise in this respect would have been some sort of a national Catholic Church with an independent archbishopric and with the Slavonic liturgy, the free use of which had been granted to the Yugoslavs long before but was now being jealously denounced by the Archbishops of Split and their "Latin" clergy.¹ Already "Ban" Kulin (d. 1204) had some similar aim, and after that aim had been frustrated, he saw himself almost compelled to take the second-best course: to become a protector of the growing Bogomil sect and of its "Bosnian Church." He was even accused before Pope Innocent III. of having embraced Bogomilism, together with 10,000 of his subjects. His sister, too (the widow of Miroslav Nemanja), was known as an actual and ardent Bogomil, ready to help all those members of the sect who sought for a refuge in her brother's State.

As to the simple folk, the Bogomil propaganda was the more successful among them, because the growing onslaught on the traditional Slavonic liturgy in their churches met with general resistance and indignation. Thus all the elements of opposition were likely to find an outlet in Bogomilism. While the prestige of the demoralised Catholic Church was falling lower and lower, the Bosnian Bogomilism rapidly grew until it was finally raised into a kind of state religion, particularly under the "Ban" and subsequent King Tvrtko (d. 1391), during whose reign Bosnia enjoyed its most prosperous period of independence. On the other hand, the Bosnian Bogomil "Church" seems to have been modified by so many compromises with the Christian Church that several historians of that movement are inclined to mistake the Bosnian Bogomils or "Patareni" (as they were called by outsiders) simply for Orthodox Christians. This view, expressed already in 1867 by Božidar Petranović and recently by Dr. Glušac and others, is hardly convincing. What approximated Bogomilism and the Eastern Church was, of course, the use of the national language in all religious functions, and also a pronounced democratic spirit. Hence the gulf between the two was smaller than that between the aristocratic "Latin" Church

¹ One of the defenders of the Slav liturgy at the Split Synod of 925 was Gregory, the bishop of Nin, whose statue, the work of Meštrović, has recently been erected in the centre of the city.

and the Bogomils. Otherwise the Bogomils called and considered themselves Christians not in the sense of Orthodox, but only in the sense of primitive Christianity. There may have been cases when they even conformed to the official Christian Churches externally, while jealously guarding all the time their own secret teaching. Anyhow, various points of external contact, external compromise and conformity¹ are not in themselves a sufficient argument against all the historical evidences and documents which testify to the widespread existence of Bogomilism in Bosnia. In addition, the Bosnian Bogomils or "Patareni" were persecuted not only by Catholics, but also by the Orthodox. An example of the Orthodox intolerance towards them can be found in the complaint of John Capistranus to the Pope Calixtus III. (1455): "*Multi ex illis haereticis Bosnensibus qui fidem tenuerunt Patharenorum audientes verbum Dei convertuntur ad fidem Romanam, sed a metropolitano Rascianorum (i.e., the Orthodox Serbs) et aliis non permittuntur reconciliari, de quibus multi moriuntur extra fidem, magis volentes extra fidem mori quam eorum Rascianorum fidem suscipere.*"²

It goes without saying that the Catholic Church was even more "militant" in this respect. The tendency to bring the Bogomils back to Catholicism was one of the motives which made Pope Innocent IV. confirm in 1248 the old privilege of using the Slavonic tongue for liturgical purposes—roughly on the territory of Bosnia, Dalmatia and Istria. In order to make the propaganda more efficient, Franciscans were sent into Bosnia towards the end of the same century. Their duties were in essence those of the Inquisitors. The circumstances compelled them, however, to adopt entirely peaceful and even beneficial methods. They used the native tongue and later, under the Turkish rule, played a conspicuous part in Bosnian literature.

Bosnian Bogomilism, however, came to an end, not through the Franciscans, but through the Turks. Having conquered Bulgaria, Serbia and Constantinople, they naturally wanted to become masters of Bosnia, from which they could get a free access to the Hungarian plain and to the whole of Middle Europe. The last Bosnian King, Stephen Thomašević, who was

¹ The so-called *Hval's Gospel* (written in 1404) can be easily considered a typical example of such a compromise. It could have been written by a Bogomil, by an Orthodox, or—with certain reservations—even by a Catholic. The somewhat later MS. of the "Christian" *Radosav* (in the library *De propaganda fide*) is decidedly Bogomil: the order and the prayers in it are analogous to the Cathar Ritual. Cf. E. Cunitz: *Ein katharisches Rituale*. Jena, 1852.

² E. Fernendžin, *Acta Bosnae*, p. 225.

a Bogomil, for political reasons embraced the Catholic faith. He also sent three Bogomil nobles to Rome for the same purpose (1461), and the famous cardinal Juan de Torquemada himself took part in their conversion. Yet all was in vain: the expected help did not come, and so Bosnia was doomed. The Bogomils themselves, resenting the apostasy of their king, supported the Turkish invaders. In 1463 Bosnia fell a prey to the Ottomans. Its last king, Stephen, was captured and beheaded.

VI.

Under the Turkish rule the Bogomilism of Bosnia gradually dissolved. Isolated as it was, since by then most of the kindred sects in the West had been more or less suppressed, it was bound to decay and lose its power of resistance. A considerable portion of its adepts—particularly the nobles—embraced Mohammedanism. They did this all the more willingly because the Moslems were the only people who treated them tolerantly. Besides, as Mohammedans they could preserve various privileges over their Christian compatriots. Yet having adopted the Mohammedan religion, they kept their own Slavonic (*i.e.*, Serbo-Croatian) language. Several Turkish viziers, generals, scholars and poets were natives of Bosnia and Hercegovina. The main language of the formidable corps of Janissaries was probably "Bosnian," and even the Sublime Porte used it for a time for diplomatic purposes. The present Mohammedan population of Bosnia is however strongly intermixed with the actual Turkish immigrants (officials, soldiers, artisans, etc.), who have blended with their Slavco-religionists.

Other Bogomils returned either to Catholicism, or to the Eastern Church. Such a transition was the easier owing to the already mentioned compromises, as well as to the fact that they had always called themselves Christians. The name "Bogomil," therefore, which had been little used, hardly survived in Bosnia. We find it in surprisingly few instances. One of them is, by the way, a didactic poem against smoking, written in 1688 by a Mohammedan Bosnian poet, Hassan Kaimija, in which there is the following passage:

"I mi smo ga pili
I u smradu bili,
Kao Bogomili."¹

¹ "We, too, used to smoke it (the Bosnians say 'to drink tobacco'), and to abide in stench, like the Bogomils." Cf. *Serbo-Kroatische Dichtungen bosnischer Moslems*. Sarajevo, 1912.

Otherwise, Bogomilism seems to have left very few traces in the religious or cultural life of Bosnia. The most impressive monuments of that period are of course the colossal tombstones, scattered all over Bosnia and Hercegovina, and even in a few adjoining parts of Dalmatia. Their usual forms are those of sarcophagi and *tumba*. Their total number is supposed to be over 100,000, and many of them are full of quaint ornaments and symbols. One can often see them even from the train. Whether most of these blocks are Bogomil or not, is still a problem. They were probably used by the Bosnian aristocrats in general, both Bogomil and Christian. Frequently they served also as boundary marks of their property.

It is interesting to note that a few Bogomil families are said to have existed quite recently in certain out-of-the-way districts (in Kreševo, Dobočani, etc.) ; but they, too, have disappeared. Such was the inglorious end of the movement in Bosnia. It was certainly spared the tragic and heroic fight of the Cathari, Albigenses, Waldenses. Its records do not know any Raymond of Toulouse, and even less anything equivalent to the fate of Bézier or Carcassonne. But for this very reason it is less remembered and less known in European history.

VII.

The aspect which still remains to be considered is the cultural value of Bogomilism. There are two factors, at any rate, to its credit. One of them is the Bogomil hatred of all injustice ; and the other an equally strong emphasis of spirituality, of the true inward religious endeavour and experience. In their violent protest against the official Church, the Bogomils, as it were, anticipated the subsequent Reformation. And so they did in their free explanation of the Gospels, which they always used and spread in the vernacular. But apart from that, the negative value of Bogomilism for both culture and life is self-evident. Only those religions have achieved great cultural tasks which, instead of running away from "Matter," have bravely accepted it, in order to mould it into something that is worthy of man and of life. In this respect the Roman Church had, with all her worldliness, a deeper and surer instinct than those sects which barricaded themselves against the temptations of "the flesh" behind an excessive and one-sided asceticism. Asceticism, if pushed too far, always becomes nihilistic and destructive.

No wonder that the Bogomils did not produce anything lasting either in art or life. Art was rejected by them *a priori*,

as it is bound to be rejected by all fanatical Puritans. As to literature, they accepted it only in so far as it was didactic and strictly moral: the Gospels, prayers, a few fragments of the Old Testament, Apocrypha, and such legends as might illustrate the Bogomil doctrines.¹ The priest Bogomil himself is supposed to have written parables and legends, but no reliable works of his are extant. Several Bogomil Apocrypha penetrated from Bulgaria into early literature of Serbia and Russia.

All things considered, the Bogomils were utterly uncreative with regard to culture. Here, if anywhere, they showed that Puritanism and culture are compatible only up to a certain line, beyond which one turns against the other. The Bogomilism of the Southern Slavs was a most emphatic affirmation of morality—in a wrong direction. Consequently it became a distortion of life, and a danger to everything that claimed to grow, that sought harmonious and many-sided development. And so we may not regret that life itself has eliminated it, as something superfluous and harmful.

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¹ The best summary of such Bogomil "literature" is Professor Jordan Ivanov's *Bogomil Books and Legends* (*Bogomilski knigi i legendi*) published by the Bulgarian Academy, 1925.